

DECONSTRUCTING THE CYCLE: VULNERABILITY AND PROSPECTS FOR SOCIAL MOBILITY IN INDIAN URBAN SLUMS

Undergraduate Honors Thesis
Sanford School of Public Policy
Duke University,
Durham, NC

Lekha Ragavendran
December 2012

Advisor: Professor Anirudh Krishna

Abstract

Urban slums across the globe have become areas where those moving from rural towns are forced to settle on their intended path towards success. Oftentimes, generations of poverty and insecurity follow this hope-filled migration. This paper investigates the lives of those that call urban slums their home. It examines which factors spur intergenerational growth and which lead to stagnation or even regression. To do so, it focuses on slums in two large south Indian cities that face similar forces of globalization and economic inequality. Through a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, it finds that institutional connectedness, education, the absence of alcoholism, and housing security influence individuals' prospects for intergenerational mobility. On the other hand, caste does not appear to have an effect upon prospects for social growth. These findings suggest specific questions that must be addressed in order to create effective policy recommendations to provide social protection for some of the country's most vulnerable urban communities.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the invaluable support and guidance of Professor Anirudh Krishna through the entirety of this project, which grew to be much more than a three-month semester abroad. I am also deeply grateful for the best honors thesis cheerleader I could have asked for. Professor Judith Kelley's unwavering commitment to encouraging the best from her students cannot be overstated. I would like to thank my family, Rangarao, Viji, and Malvika Ragavendran, for their love and support. And, finally, I owe my thanks to my remarkable translator, Mrs. Nalini Senthilnathan; Janalakshmi, for their assistance with the Bangalore and Chennai fieldwork; and, especially, the one hundred men and women who were willing to share their stories allowing me a glimpse into their family's many hardships and achievements.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN GROWTH	5
A. SOCIAL INEQUALITY IN URBAN SLUMS	6
B. FACTORS INFLUENCING SOCIAL MOBILITY	7
Institutional Connectedness	7
Education	8
Alcoholism	9
Housing Security	9
Caste System	10
DATA DESCRIPTION	11
A. METHODOLOGY	11
Bangalore Data	12
Chennai Data	12
B. EXPLANATORY MEASURES	12
C. OCCUPATIONAL MOBILITY MEASURES	15
EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE	18
A. SOCIAL MOBILITY DISTRIBUTION	18
B. UNDERSTANDING DIFFERENCES IN SOCIAL MOBILITY ACROSS HOUSEHOLDS	19
Connectedness	19
Education	21
Alcoholism	22
Household Security	24
Caste	26
C. LIMITATIONS	27
REFERENCES	31

In the town of Manapakkam in the outskirts of Chennai—a large urban hub within southern India—Devi¹ lives with her two school-going children and husband. Devi grew up in an orphanage and worked as a housemaid from adolescence. With the ashram providing only one meal a day, Devi was forced to beg or go to sleep hungry on multiple occasions. At the age of 16, the family she worked for took her in and required her to do degrading tasks as a housekeeper—harassing her for being an orphan and providing her little more than leftover meals and a floor to sleep on. After years of poor treatment, Devi eloped with the family’s driver and found herself in another family where she was not accepted because of her orphan background and lack of money. After dealing with poverty, harassment, and depression, Devi moved away with her husband and is now working 10-hour days for Rs. 8000/month (roughly, \$150 at the current exchange rate) as a housemaid. Her husband is an alcoholic and does not bring any income home to the family even on the few days he does choose to work his labor jobs. She struggles to put her children through school and her son does not have any interest in continuing his education.

About an hour away, Priya who lives in Valarasakkam, another neighborhood in Chennai, was prodded into marriage with a distant relative at the age of 18 by her mother who had few resources to take care of all five of her children. Born in a village of Tamil Nadu, Priya moved to her husband’s village in Andhra where she suffered from her 33-year old husband’s heavy drinking habits and physical abuse. Although a government officer, her husband made a mere Rs. 300 per month or about \$6.00 at the time. Nine years later Priya’s husband died from a heart attack and Priya was left at the age of 27 without any assets outside of her husband’s land, which brought enough money to scrape by for three years with her two children. Overcoming Indian societal taboos around widows and without a high school diploma, Priya moved to Chennai and started her own Amway and chit fund business². Her children both earned their college degrees and her daughter moved to Australia after her marriage. Priya now lives with her son and has an average monthly income of Rs. 30,000.

What makes Priya’s story different from Devi’s and the thousands of individuals that do not have as much fortune in their voyage to Chennai and in their subsequent generations within urban slums? Understanding key elements of Priya’s narrative and the handfuls of other “success” stories can provide us with an understanding of what types of policies and initiatives can dissolve the risks that feed into growing inequality in developing nations. Drawing upon previous studies and my own fieldwork, this paper argues that it is possible to narrow the social gap through institutional resources, strengthened education systems, alcoholism reduction programming, and access to housing security.

This paper draws from narratives of urban slum residents across two cities in southern India. It explores the questions: Which factors allow for intergenerational social mobility in urban slum populations across India? In contrast, which forces define vulnerability and what types of social protections can be used to combat them within such contexts?

First, the paper defines social mobility and explores social inequality in India. Next, several factors, including institutional connectedness, education, alcoholism, housing security, and caste are be tested as explanatory variables of the social mobility observed. The conclusion draws upon these

¹ Real names are replaced for the sake of participants’ confidentiality.

² Amway offers individuals the opportunity to become independent business owners, where they can sell Amway beauty products, bath products, home items, etc. individually for a commission. A chit fund is a kind of savings scheme practiced in India whereby individuals or companies may enter into an agreement with a specified of persons that every one of them shall subscribe a certain sum of money by way of periodical installments over a definite period and that each such subscriber shall, in his turn, as determined by lot or by auction or by tender or in such other manner as may be specified in the chit agreement, be entitled to the prize amount, as defined by the Chit Funds Act of 1982.

relationships to develop policy questions that must be addressed to tackle systemic inequalities in Indian urban slums.

SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE CONTEXT OF URBAN GROWTH

Developing urban centers offer a unique perspective on the forces behind inequality, and its counterpart, a lack of social mobility. Urban development has garnered substantial attention within the policy research community. Rising city GDPs and rural-urban migration are popular subjects among academic scholars who are interested in effective methods of encouraging development (Gupta & Mitra, 2002). This paper focuses its attention on India, a country with the fourth largest GDP in the world at 4.51 trillion US dollars and yet a Gini index, which measures social inequality, above Ethiopia (73rd highest GDP) and Kazakhstan (53rd highest GDP). India's urban communities made up 30% of its total 1.2 billion population in 2010 and continue to grow at 2.4% every year (CIA World Factbook, 2010). Indian poverty ratios suggest that while urban rates continue to decrease, they also continue to represent the country's overall poverty trends (see Table 1). This suggests that Indian urban slums may be exemplary of lacking intergenerational mobility across the country.

Table 1: Poverty Rates 1973-2010

Year	Poverty Ratio (Per cent)		
	Rural	Urban	Combined
1973-1974	56.1	49.0	54.9
1977-1978	53.1	45.2	51.3
1983	45.6	40.8	4.5
1987-1988	39.1	38.2	38.9
1993-1994	50.1	31.8	45.3
1999-2000	27.1	23.6	26.1
2004-2005	42	25.5	37.2
2009-2010	33.8	20.9	29.8

Source: India Planning Commission

Cities are not full of poor people because cities make people poor, but because cities attract poor people with the prospect of improvement (Glaeser, 2011). New rural-to-urban migrants in developing nations yearn for their share of unprecedented economic dynamism in the cities to which they migrate, only to find themselves without the resources or qualifications to pursue such a dream. This phenomenon holds true to urban slums around the world, where there is a significant disparity between the promise of growing urban wealth and the reality of social mobility prospects (Davis, 2007). The development of businesses in the urban center may contribute to a more globalized perspective of the world, but as Krishna claims, it is not the time to be patient and wait for the inequalities to cure themselves—we can create substantial institutional solutions to relieve the social ills that are keeping 22 per cent of the Indian urban population in slums (Krishna, 2010). Within this context, this paper examines the lack of equal opportunity and social mobility associated with this growth within one of the fastest growing nations in the world today: India. It is possible for this discrepancy to lessen, as most research would indicate. The means of doing so, as put forth by current literature, is not comprehensive or cohesive.

This paper measures social mobility by the extent of occupation status growth across generations. Intergenerational occupational growth is a commonly used measure of social mobility among researchers, particularly in developing communities in India (e.g. Kumar, et al., 2002a, 2002b; Majumder 2010; Motiram and Singh 2012). The change in occupation status from one generation to the next allows insight into whether or not there is growth in low-income areas, and if there is, what defines or encourages this growth.

A. Social Inequality in Urban Slums

To explore how India can encourage social mobility, it is necessary to start by considering its existing levels of social inequality. In 2003, the UN released a report titled the “Challenge of Slums”, which focused on the conditions of 924 million people in slums across the globe. It notes that 43 per cent of the combined urban population in developing regions lived in slums. Slums increased after the financial crisis of 1997 in India, despite improvement in economic conditions because urban populations grew faster than the capacity of cities to support them. India currently holds one-third of the world’s slum populations and provides an excellent case study of the growing slum and inequality phenomenon (UN, 2003).

While slums in themselves represent inequality in Indian society, they are not homogenous to any extent. Inequality pervades within slum communities. One study across 211 slums in Pune, India found that occupations vary from class IV government employees, ammunition factory employees, painters, drivers, small entrepreneurs or even office goers. A majority of the women in slums work as housemaids, sweepers, vendors and even government employees. The survey also revealed the presence of a small number of computer professionals, teachers, nurses and doctors in some of the slums. Most households had incomes beginning from Rs. 2000 to Rs 6000 per month. For households where both husband and wife work, income ranged between Rs 6000 and Rs 7500 (UN, 2003). The diversity of occupation status and income is further explored using data from Bangalore and Chennai later in this paper.

The study of inequality in India has often led to a consideration of the growing informal sector, or the wide range of labor market activities including casual, temporary, or subsistence agriculture jobs with low pay and poor job security (World Bank, 2012). In particular, the National Commission for the Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector has devoted its operations to address the staggering 92 per cent of the Indian workforce that are considered informal workers (NCEUS, 2007). Informal workers are defined as those that do not have regular or legally protected employment, work or social security. Workers in the unorganized sector had a significantly higher incidence of poverty (20.5 per cent) than their counterparts in the organized sector (11.3 per cent). A variety of factors, several of which are investigated in this paper, have been related to the perpetuation of the unorganized economy, including education, home security, caste, and religion (NCEUS, 2007). Living in slums and informal work tend to overlap, as observed through the Bangalore and Chennai studies discussed below. In a country where 77 per cent of the population, or 836 million, had an income below \$2 per day in 2005, occupational status within and beyond the informal sector offers a contextual framework for measuring levels of social inequality and mobility. Inequality, particularly in terms of employment, is a fact of life across India’s cities. This suggests a necessary exploration of the forces that determine movement across occupational status.

B. Factors influencing Social Mobility

Literature on social mobility has historically concentrated on Western industrialized centers (Morgan, 2006; Solon, 2002). These studies were conducted in a post-Cold War era, focused on burgeoning European states. Moreover, literature focused on developing countries in South Asia has dealt primarily with economic development. Those studies that do address South Asian inequalities tend to rely on rural communities for their data (Krishna & Bajpai, 2011). Those that speak to urban slum populations are targeted at the equality of results rather than the factors that affect equality of opportunity for mobility (Planning Organisation Division, 2006).

Within this gap of literature, certain studies do tackle the causes of lacking social mobility in India. Their findings fall into the broad categories of: 1) lack of institutional connectedness 2) education disparities 3) the presence of alcoholism 4) housing insecurity and 5) the caste system.

Institutional Connectedness

Institutional connectedness answers the question: what are your connections to the world outside of the slums? Informational sources, connections to those of influence, and connections to financial institutions each represent a dimension of a person's understanding and knowledge of a life outside of the one they were born into. This is likely to be a reflection of an individual's prospects for intergenerational mobility because it provides the outlets through which knowledge may be enhanced for occupational and income growth.

Using a unique methodology testing social mobility within individual households and communities, rather than with a top-down approach, Krishna's interviews indicate the necessity for institutional channels that provide knowledge resources for children whose aspirations have been largely defined by their limited exposure to their parents' informal sector career path (Krishna 2010). Kumar, et al., agree with this justification as they make it clear in their findings that there has been limited advancement in intergenerational class position (Kumar, et al., 2002a). Kumar and his colleagues find limited advancement in intergenerational class mobility and argue that inconsistent institutional access prevents growth within Indian cities (Kumar, et al., 2002a). These authors agree that there exists a strong relationship between intergenerational career paths and question whether this might be due to a lack of knowledge for career development.

The need for local governance reform and NGO involvement has also been explored as reasons behind lacking social mobility. Appadurai advocates a form of 'deep democracy' that provides a partnership between globalized non-governmental organizations and local urban slum communities to tackle the worsening issues of slum life—health, sanitation, housing, etc. (Appadurai, 2002). His appeal for local governance highlights the importance of self-sustainability and innovation. Government reports in Tamil Nadu, a populous state of southern India, call for similar initiatives to tackle the growing presence of slums: "The new agenda for urban politics, as promoted by civil society groups and critical researchers, is precisely to move the issue of poverty empowerment of slum dwellers and partnerships between city government and the people to the center stage of urban politics – and thereby create a new dominant discourse" (Planning Organisation Commission, 2006, p. 197). Access to government and NGO institutions is thus recognized as means of improving social mobility prospects.

While the methodology and perspective of each differs, a variety of studies advocate that institutional connections are related to social mobility. This includes institutional channels that offer

knowledge resources and the possible aspiration to improve career prospects. This discussion leads to this study's first hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1:

Lack of institutional connectedness stalls social mobility. Individuals with greater access to information, (through role models, institutional resources, government agencies, etc), are more likely to have moved up the social ladder over generations.

Education

There is substantial literature to support the relationship between education and upward mobility. The 2003 UN report states that lacking education is a major impediment to individuals improving their circumstance and moving out of poverty (UN, 2003). Swaminathan cites education as critical for productivity, income generation and upward socio-economic mobility among low-income workers in Bombay (Swaminathan, 1997). Pant argues that job training is necessary to empower future employees with skills to move to the formal sector despite their parents' informal sector background (Pant, 2003).

Other arguments are more nuanced. Iannelli and Patterson conclude that both the expansion of professional job positions and education have led more people from working class backgrounds to top-level occupations in Scotland. However, they also argue that education expansion has not reduced the gap between social classes in the chances of entering top-level occupations. In other words, education allows for social mobility but does not defeat inequality of results across classes (Iannelli and Patterson, 2005). Krishna convincingly argues against education being a solution in itself as he points to a lack of *aspiration* in the children in his studies (Krishna, 2010). Majumder explores the level of intergenerational mobility in terms of both education and occupation and finds both to be low in India. Specifically, he discovers that occupational mobility is lower than educational mobility indicating that education progress is not being completely transformed to occupation improvement. In urban areas in particular, occupation status is more continuous while education attainment has improved (Majumder, 2010). This study is limited in the sense that it does not actually test the relationship between these two forms of mobility. There is still room for a positive association between education and occupational mobility despite one being less prevalent than the other in urban slums.

There is reason to believe that education has a positive relationship with social mobility. However, it does not stand sufficient on its own without taking into consideration the larger institutional access that would allow for the growth of aspiration to begin with. Education alone might not explain social mobility, but it can definitely play a role in doing so.

Hypothesis 2:

Poor education decreases social mobility. Individuals with a stronger education background are more likely to have moved up the social ladder over generations.

Alcoholism

The United Nations categorizes alcoholism under mental health issues in their reports related to development. However, there is reason to believe that outside of its health effects alone, alcoholism can prevent social mobility across generations. Twenty-five percent of male drinkers in 2003 in India were heavy episodic drinkers and about 15% of female drinkers were heavy drinkers. Although morbidity rates might be low, the level of heavy drinking signifies the risk of men, usually the breadwinners, not being able provide their households with consistent monthly incomes (WHO, 2004).

Abstinence rates are low in high-income, high-consumption countries, and higher in North African and South Asian countries (UN, 2011). It is estimated that 20% percent of absenteeism and 40% of accidents at the work place are related to alcohol. The annual loss across India due to alcohol is estimated to be Rs. 70 000 to 80 000 million (UN, 2011). Alcohol is also related to domestic violence and emotional trauma. Three to 45% of household expenditure can be spent on alcohol – burdening the poorest of urban hubs (IAPA, 2004). Alcohol use directly impacts the family, the criminal justice system, the employment sector, and the economic and social development of developing countries negatively besides its medical consequences alone (Jernigan et al., 2000). These effects continue to grow as alcohol consumption increases among developing countries, due to urbanization, changes in gender and age roles, and high intensity mass marketing and promotion of alcoholic beverages by multi-national corporations (Jernigan et al., in press). Although there is little written on the intergenerational mobility effects of alcohol consumption, it became clear to me after interviewing over one hundred households in Chennai, that it has a negative impact on low-income communities. Presence of alcoholism has the ability to influence the welfare and income of families and may lead to occupation mobility barriers.

Hypothesis 3:

The presence of alcoholism in a household stalls social mobility. Households with at least one member who is an alcoholic is less likely to have moved up the social ladder over generations.

Housing Security

Health is one of those unique features of security that are universal. Home security is another such fundamental need upon which any form of social mobility must be based upon. In urban India, skyrocketing rents often require low-income tenants to pay a large portion of their monthly income for shelter regardless of whether the home is itself documented or not. Those settlements that are undocumented—ranging from shantytowns to concrete apartment buildings—are all vulnerable to government-forced resettlement at any time. Fortunately, national public policy has moved away from forced resettlement towards respecting limited available housing options. Nonetheless, housing security provides a very basic and fundamental stepping stone for any form of social mobility, whether in the developed or developing world.

The Global Campaign for Secure Tenure (GCST), a major international initiative since 1999, addresses the outcomes of unstable housing, including the inability to mobilize household capital, social exclusion and poor access to basic facilities. “Lack of housing security makes it very difficult

for people to participate in society, to establish firm roots and to build upon their networks and assets in order to obtain regular access to income-earning opportunities” (UN, 2003, p. 140). In this paper social mobility is measured by intergenerational occupation growth. Unfortunately, it is nearly impossible to gain a formal sector job without sustainable housing (UN, 2003). Mitra explores the growth of urban land prices in India and concludes that limited incomes from informal sector work in the face of rising land and housing cost leads to slum dwelling around the country (Mitra, 2009). As discussed previously, those that do enter slums oftentimes do not leave them for multiple generations. Thus, there exists some evidence that housing security may be directly related to intergenerational occupational growth.

Hypothesis 4:

Housing security increases social mobility. Those households that do not own their homes or have documented housing are less likely to have moved up the social ladder over generations.

Caste System

India’s conservative caste system has been addressed in different ways across the country for decades, but still fosters substantial socio-economic segregation; research points to caste as a persistent element underlying social inequality and the propagation of intergenerational poverty, however it does not conclude that caste dictates social mobility. Kumar and his colleagues point to the financial, educational and social constraints placed by caste designation, which has also historically dictated socio-economic class. However, they infer that the stagnation of occupational growth is attributable to access to resources, rather than caste alone. (Kumar et al., 2002). Munshi and Rosenszweig supplement this argument by investigating caste as a vital form of social insurance, attributing social immobility to in-caste marriage customs and employment prospects. They find that increasing exposure to the modern economy and the inconsistencies in educational choices and future occupational outcomes between boys and girls in the same caste has lessened the significance of the deep-seated caste system (Munshi & Rosenszweig, 2009). In other words, traditional institutions shape occupation to the extent that those individuals are not exposed to new opportunities and access that accompany globalization.

The NCEUS report a significant discrepancy in the occupational status of Hindu STs, SCs, OBCs, and Muslims as compared to upper caste Hindus. While the report refers to social status as means to access human capital and better jobs, it does not comment on caste-based prospects for intergenerational growth out of poverty (NCEUS, 2007). Jalan and Murgai use National Family Health Survey data to conclude that educational mobility in India is differentiated across the rich-poor divide rather than caste lines (Jalan & Murgai, 2007). Likewise, Desphande and Palshikar use Pune survey data to find that caste does matter for upward mobility, but occupational mobility across generations is not shaped by caste factors (Desphande & Palshikar, 2008).

While caste plays a large role in Indian culture itself, it seems insignificant to the extent that globalization has provides for channels of information outside of social traditions. The methods in which it does affect mobility stem from the other forces discussed, including institutional connections and education. While certain castes might reside in slums more than others, caste does not directly explain lacking social mobility. Caste creates knowledge and education barriers that directly impact occupational status and income level in attaining a job. Thus, it is not productive to be asking how to address this cultural institution directly, but how best to create physical and

knowledge resources to allow for a broader understanding of career development so that familial custom is not the only option younger generations of low-income families see as attainable.

Hypothesis 5:

Caste inequality is not the root cause of unequal social mobility for low-income families in South India. When other factors are accounted for, the level of intergenerational mobility does not vary substantially by caste.

DATA DESCRIPTION

A. Methodology

This study follows the Q-Squared method of poverty analysis, which emphasizes the value of both quantitative and qualitative analysis in dissecting internal processes and outcomes that are important to understand in policy decision-making. Many reputable researchers in the discipline support the complementary use of both methods of analysis. Kanbur argues that “qualitative work helps allow for (i) suggesting causal connections to be econometrically tested, (ii) understanding statistical outliers, (iii) finding appropriate exclusion restrictions’ in econometrics and (iv) appreciating the extent of measurement error” and that its use along with statistical data can provide credible and insightful understandings for policymakers (Kanbur, 2001, p. 2).

Occupation status rather than income is chosen as a measure of growth because of the complicated nature of changing inflation rates and the cost of living across even the last twenty years in India. In addition, incomes are hardly stable and fluctuate vastly month-to-month in slums. Occupation status is recorded based on the occupation of the head of the household across two generations, almost always males. Occupations were categorized by similar functions and required skills and ordered by average monthly salaries. A more detailed discussion of this assessment is found further in the paper.

I use two sets of data from two similar south Indian cities: Bangalore and Chennai. Both sets of data come from slums in large Indian cities that are experiencing the same economic forces as the country continues to develop in the twenty-first century. Each individual represented one household unit, which included both the female and male heads of the household and any children. The data collected from the Bangalore study is used as a foundation for statistical inquiry into the relationships between the factors and indicator of intergenerational mobility. The data collected from the Chennai study complements the general findings of the Bangalore data and provide qualitative and process-tracing depth to these findings. Cause and effect relationships cannot be defined by statistically significant correlations alone; the rich narratives recorded in Chennai provide insights into the nature and chronology of these tested relationships. While the interrelated effects of the different factors are not explored here, they can often overlap in practice.

Janalakshmi, a national microfinance organization, provided support and assistance in both studies; however, it was made clear that all answers had no effect on participants relationship with Janalakshmi and interviews were conducted with the purpose of providing policy recommendations to improve the lives of Indian households like their own.

Bangalore Data

The data contains information on 1,481 households in 14 officially recognized slum communities in Bangalore. These slum communities represent a spectrum of lifestyles amongst the slum population in Bangalore. Interviews were conducted in 2010 by a team of trained interviewers and under the guidance of Professor Anirudh Krishna of the Sanford School of Public Policy. Slums were chosen randomly from a list of officially recognized slums in Bangalore. Again, the relationship between the explanatory variables and social mobility are tested based on measurements in each household.

The average household monthly income is Rs. 5980, barely \$120 US Dollars, across 1,481 households. The median age of the Bangalore interviewees is 40 and most the individuals fell between the age range of 32 and 45. The Bangalore study finds a median income of Rs. 6600 per month per household. The Karnataka urban poverty line is Rs. 908 per person per month. This translates to Rs. 3632 for a four-person family per month. In 2009, Karnataka's urban poverty rate is 19.6% (Planning Commission 2010).

Chennai Data

The main question behind the Chennai study was: What factors allow for certain individuals to gain social mobility in Chennai?³ The majority of individuals interviewed were women. All interviews are anonymous and can only be identified by their qualitative and quantitative descriptive factors. Mrs. Nalini Senthilnathan, who is a native of Chennai and speaks Tamil fluently, provided her translation services. These interviews record each family's detailed intergenerational narratives.

The study includes 100 different individuals from six different towns within Chennai—providing a fair representation of this urban center. In each town, people from at least two neighborhoods were interviewed. Janalakshmi group leaders were asked to include women they felt had gained some level of social mobility so it's clear that the sample is not representative of the city's low-income group, but rather over-represents the little mobility that exists.

The median age of the Chennai interviewees is 37. Most of these individuals fell between the age range of 30 and 43. The median income across 67 households is Rs. 10981 per month. About 90% of the households interviewed had a monthly income less than Rs. 22000. The international poverty line is \$1.25/day. For an average four-person family, the poverty line would be Rs. 7665 per month. Tamil Nadu's state-specific poverty line for urban areas is set by the Planning Commission in 2010 to be Rs. 800.8 per month per person. For an average family, that would equate to Rs. 3203.3 per month. This is less than half the international standard. Tamil Nadu's urban poverty rate was 12.8% in 2009 (Planning Commission, 2010). By any measure, the median monthly income found across Chennai slums reflects much progress to be made.

This cross-section of low-income household in Bangalore and Chennai provides an insightful look at what issues are prevalent across those families that do and do not exhibit intergenerational mobility.

B. Explanatory Measures

A variety of factors are tested a) to indicate the absence or presence of intergenerational mobility and b) to attempt to explain why there is this lack of social mobility in urban Indian centers.

³ See Appendix for Bangalore and Chennai Questionnaires

Specifically, it investigates occupational status (the status of the primary breadwinner's occupation based on the level of monthly salary) as an indicator of intergenerational mobility. A household that went from the informal to formal sector represents substantive intergenerational growth.

In the attempt to explain the presence of this growing gap between those that are able to profit from India's overall economic growth and those that are unable, the paper considers the five above-mentioned factors in each household:

The first factor is the connectedness index from the Bangalore study, which is a combination of identification and support networks, related to the institutional features discussed above. Specifically, interviewees were asked "Which among the following sources do you use regularly (i.e. at least once a month)?" to identify their information network – coded 1 (yes) or 2 (no). Subsequent choices included community organization, NGO, internet, household members, neighbors, community leaders, government officials, radio, TV, newspaper, and local assembly. The general connectedness index is the sum of the number of these information sources. I also use an institutional connectedness index, using the sum of information sources related directly to formal institutions: community organizations, NGOs, community leaders, government officials, newspapers, and local assemblies. These indices represent the level of connection to the outside world each household has, and thus the opportunity for information related to social mobility. A higher value represented a household with the strongest information network (see Figures A and B).

Figure A: General Connectedness Index Distribution, Bangalore

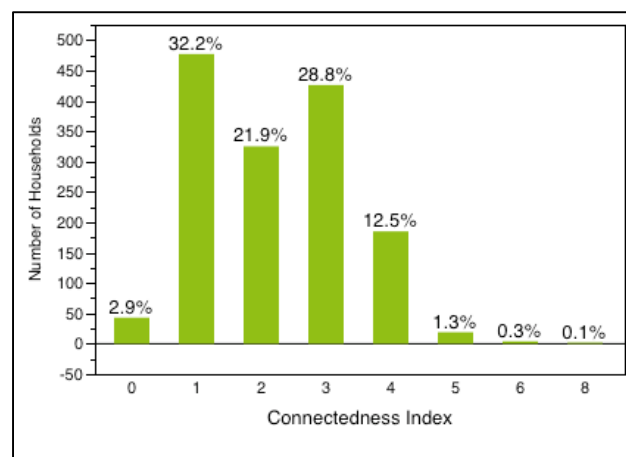
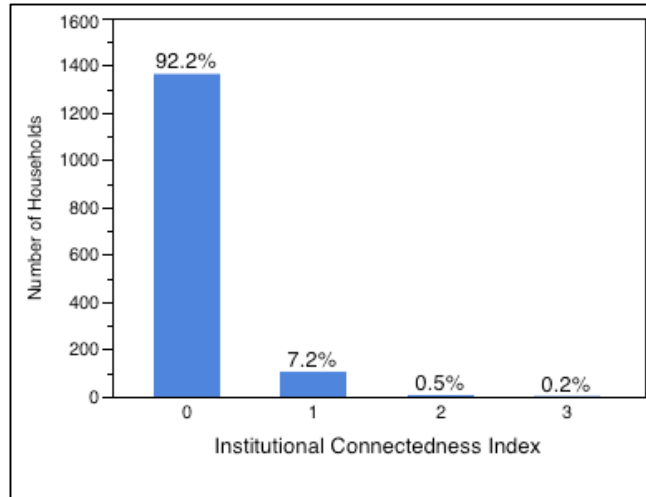
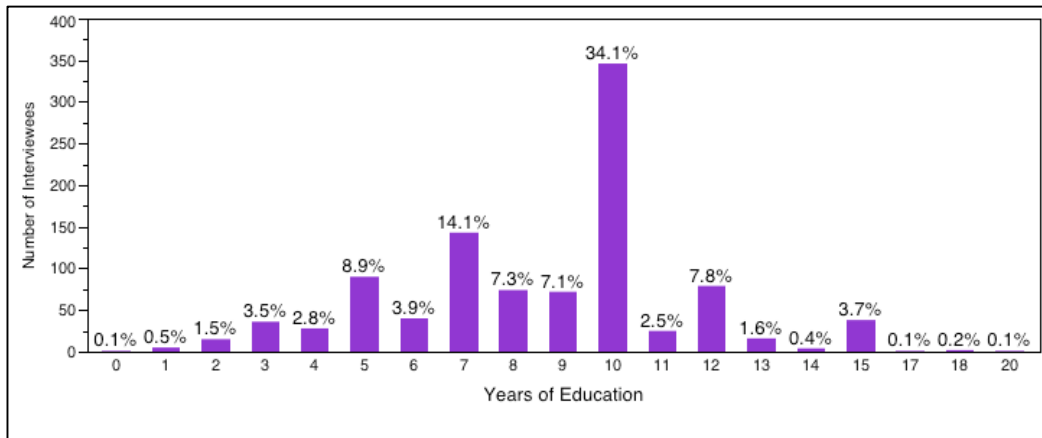


Figure B: Institutional Connectedness Index Distribution, Bangalore



The second of these factors is education (see Figure C), or more specifically, the number of years of schooling (K-college) among Bangalore interviewees. The third factor investigated with regards to its influence on intergenerational mobility is the presence of alcoholism in a household—specifically defined as one or more members who consume alcohol regularly in any given household. This variable is tested through the Chennai study and is discussed through qualitative observations and narrative examples.

Figure C: Education Distribution, Bangalore



The fourth factor is housing security based on the home the Bangalore interviewees lived in at the time of the survey (see Figure D). This factor is coded 1 (if the interviewee owns the house), 2 (if the interviewee leases the house), and 3 (if the interviewee rents the house). The fifth factor tested is caste, a historical indicator of social status in India. This variable is coded for general class (GEN), other backwards classes (OBC), scheduled castes (SC), scheduled tribes (ST), and other castes (see Figure E).

Figure D: Housing Security Distribution, Bangalore

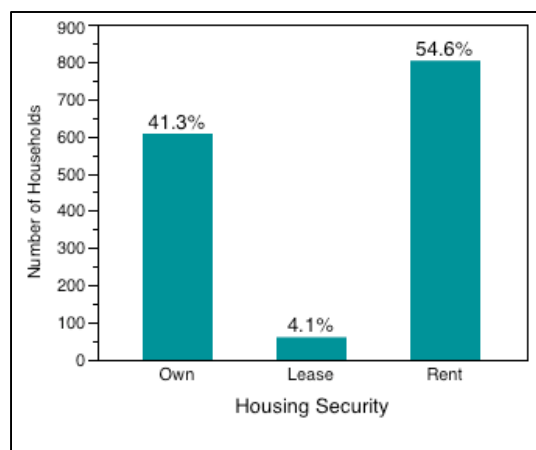
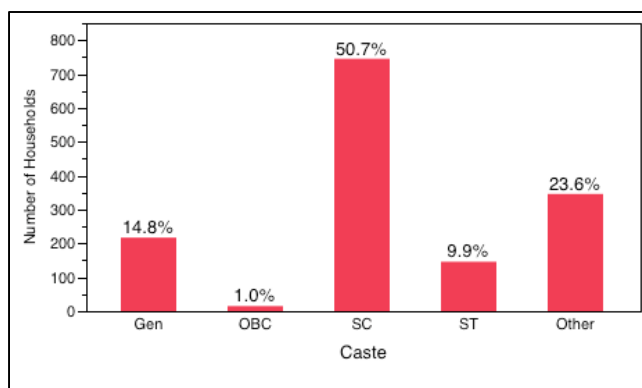


Figure E: Caste Distribution, Bangalore



Each of these five factors is explored separately through two sets of data to test the validity of their respective hypotheses. These five factors provide a preliminary investigation around the causes behind lacking intergenerational mobility. Using these measures and rich interview narratives to provide insight into cause-effect relationships, this study illustrates the various forces that affect social mobility. In doing so, it proposes ideas on how to combat inequality in India. The following table establishes the diversity and demographic trends visible through the data studied (see Table 2).

Table 2: Statistical Results, Bangalore

	Lowest Score	Highest Score	Mean	Median	Standard Deviation
General Connectedness Index	0	8	2.21	2	1.18
Institutional Connectedness Index	0	3	.09	0	.32
Education (years)	0	20	8.63	10	2.92
Housing Security	1	3	-	-	-

C. Occupational Mobility Measures

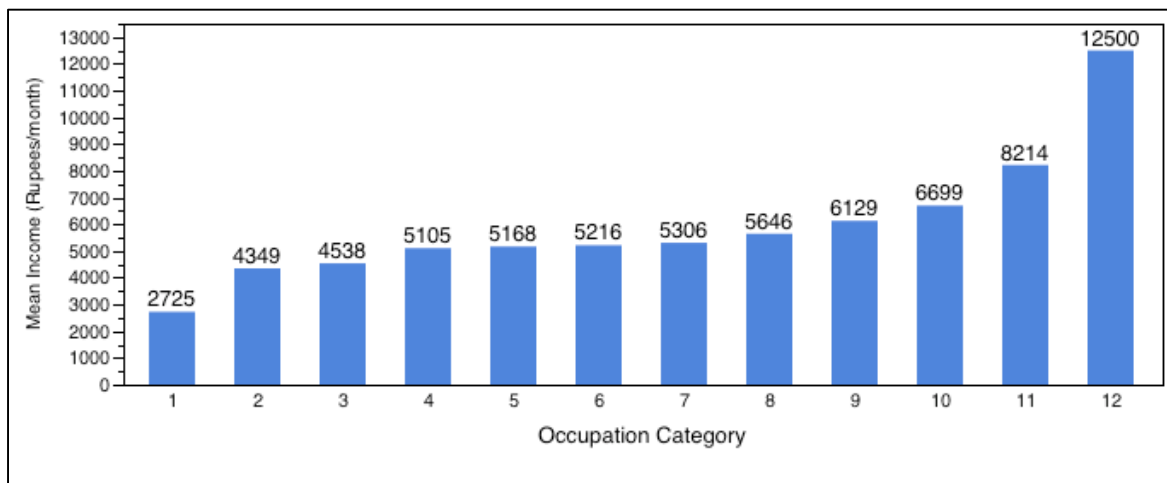
Occupational mobility is the key outcome variable used to test intergenerational social mobility in this investigation. Occupations ranged from coolie (labor) work to computer engineers among households interviewed.⁴ They were divided into categories based on the level of education,

⁴ While the direction of intergenerational occupation change is accurately reflected by these measures, the magnitude of each increment is not consistent. In other words, the difference between an index of 3 and a 9 is significant to the extent that the latter household has higher status and earns more income, but it does not tell us the

training, and/or skill each required. These categories include both formal and informal employment. In Bangalore, occupational categories were divided into fourteen categories: labor jobs, housekeeping, factory work, small business employee, private company office, business owner, individual sales, skilled work, driver, agricultural work, building contractor, government work, military work, and highly skilled work (see Table 3). Occupations were coded and ordered by level of income in today's currency (see Figure F).

These values are then compared across generation – from father to son – to find a positive, negative, or zero intergenerational growth value. Male occupations were used, as they represent the primary breadwinners for most families in India. For example, if the current head of household is an auto rickshaw driver (index: 9) in Bangalore and his father had worked as a coolie (index: 2), the household would have an assigned occupational mobility value of +7. While the increments between occupational indices cannot be proven consistent, the general level of welfare based on household income is accurately reflected by this method. A household that has experienced negative social mobility—for example, if the father had a government position (index: 11) and his son currently works as a factory laborer (index: 7)—their social mobility value is represented by a negative value (-4, in this example) reflecting the decrease in welfare as measured by household income. The central question in this paper is around why some families have undergone positive growth and some negative. The intergenerational occupation values provide a scale with which to measure mobility across the south Indian households. The distribution of this growth measure raises an interesting point about the welfare of slum residents in south India.

Figure F: Average Income by Occupation Type (Current Generation), Bangalore



actual difference in income levels. Because the differences between two successive levels are not equal, the numbers for intergenerational change should be represented as ordinal.

Table 3: Occupation Categories (Current Generation), Bangalore

Category	Current Generation					Previous Generation	
	Type of Jobs	Number of Households	% of All Households	Mean Income (Rs./month)	Confidence Interval ($\alpha=.05$)	Number of Households	% of All Households
1	Housekeeping	92	6.3%	2725	1971-3479	20	1.5%
2	Labor (coolie, welding, watchman, etc.)	422	28.9%	4349	3997-4702	720	52.7%
3	Agriculture	13	.9%	4538	2532-6545	211	15.4%
4	Individual Sales (vegetable, flowers, etc.)	79	5.4%	5105	4286-5924	54	4.0%
5	Small business employee	37	2.5%	5167	3978-6357	13	1.0%
6	Skilled work (plumber, mechanic, electrician, garments, etc.)	326	22.4%	5216	4815-5617	131	9.6%
7	Factory work	18	1.2%	5306	3600-7011	12	.9%
8	Businessman (broker, press, etc.)	113	7.8%	5646	4965-6327	51	3.7%
9	Driver	241	16.5%	6129	5663-6595	77	5.6%
10	Company employee (call center, bank, private school, etc.)	87	6.0%	6699	5923-7474	33	2.4%
11	Government employee (civil work, police, rail, etc.)	15	1.0%	8214	6281-10148	22	1.6%
12	Building contractor	13	.9%	12500	10494-14506	7	.5%
13	Military	0	0%	-	-	13	1.0%
14	High skill work (doctor, pilot, etc.)	0	0%	-	-	2	.1%

EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

A. Social Mobility Distribution

Using the occupational mobility measure discussed above, I examined the distribution of social mobility values across the 1,481 households interviewed in Bangalore (see Figure G and Figure H). The median intergenerational change found is zero (see Table 4), which exemplifies the overall stasis present in urban slums. In other words, an equal number of families regressed or maintained their occupation status over generations than the number that grew in the Bangalore households. This finding explains the bleak odds of improvement for low-income families living in urban India. Among those families that did improve over the past generation, the magnitude of change is unimpressive. Fifty percent of all families interviewed were within the zero to four range in intergenerational growth. And over twenty-five percent of households experienced no growth at all across generations.

Figure G: Intergenerational Mobility Distribution, Bangalore

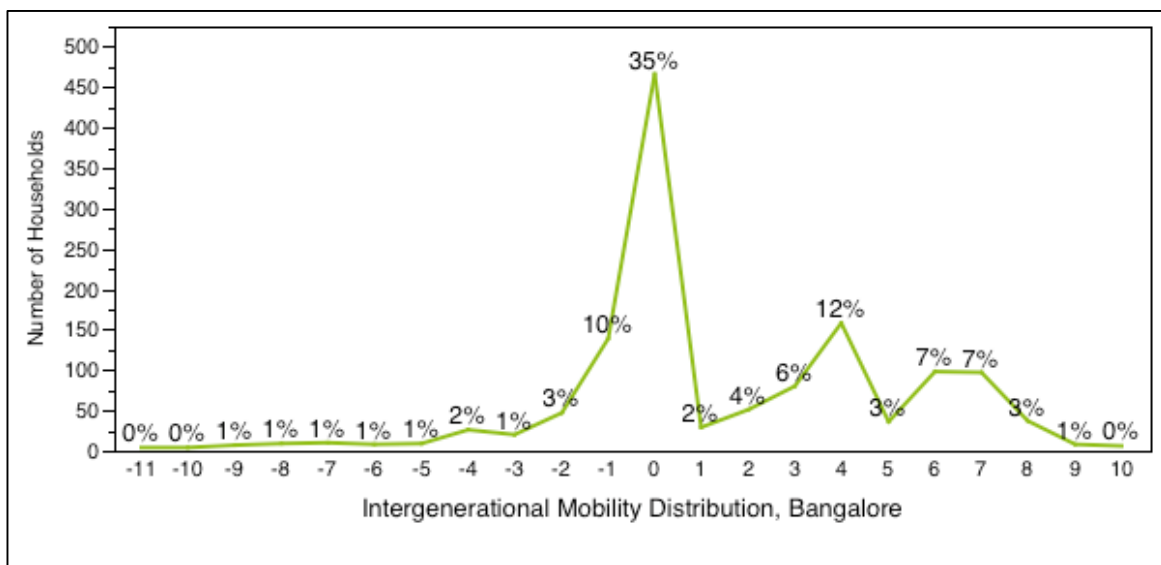


Figure H: Direction of Social Mobility, Bangalore

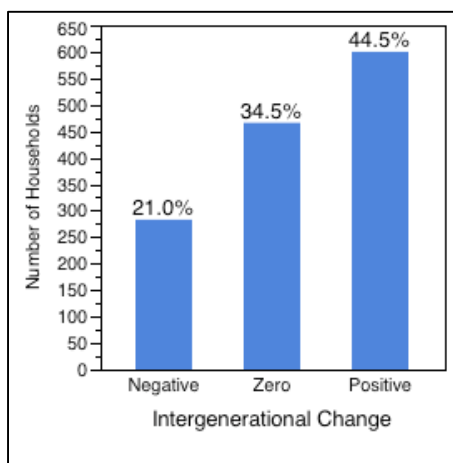


Table 4: Summary Statistics of Social Mobility, Bangalore

Summary Statistics			
Mean	1.5559674	Maximum	10
Std Dev	3.5475808	90%	7
Std Err Mean	0.0965887	75%	4
Upper 95% Mean	1.7454479	Median	0
Lower 95% Mean	1.3664869	25%	0
N	1349	Minimum	-11

The Chennai study findings do not represent better prospects. Most families displayed little social mobility from their previous generation and only a handful of families represented significant intergenerational growth. The reasons behind this lack of mobility can be explored through the five hypotheses proposed earlier, relating to connectedness, education, alcoholism, housing security, and caste. If these variables do have a positive association with social mobility indices, then the study can conclude that these explanatory variables may be the defining factors behind growth and lack of growth among low-income urban Indian households.

B. Understanding Differences in Social Mobility Across Households

Connectedness

Both the general and institutional connectedness indices were tested against intergenerational change of occupation status in the Bangalore data. This analysis concludes that there is a positive relationship between level of connectedness and social mobility (see Figure I and Figure J). In other words, those households that had access to information beyond their household members were more likely to have grown in occupation status across generations in these Bangalore communities. In addition, specific connections to community organizations, NGOs, community leaders, government officials, or local assemblies significantly improved prospects for social mobility. This suggests that institutional resources and knowledge resources can contribute to positive growth in occupational mobility.

Figure I: Social Mobility Index vs. General Connectedness Index, Bangalore

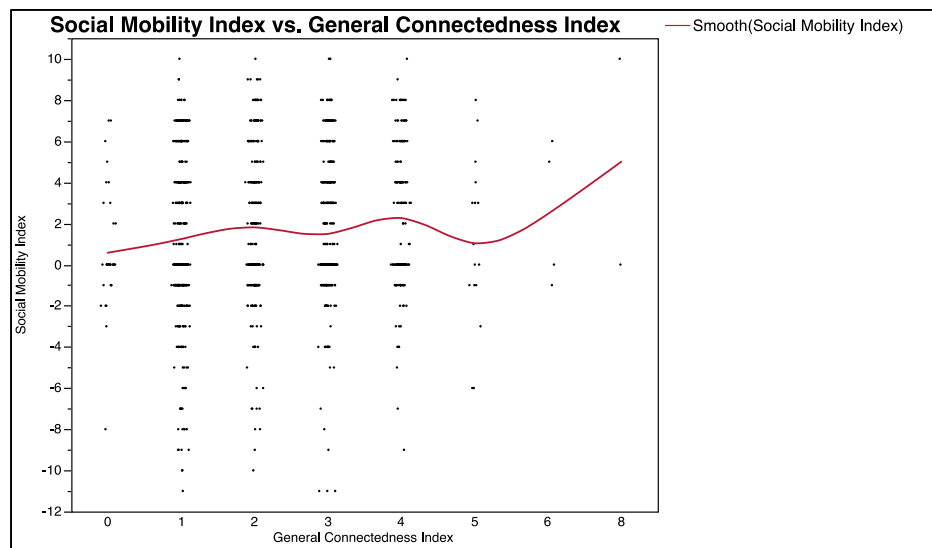
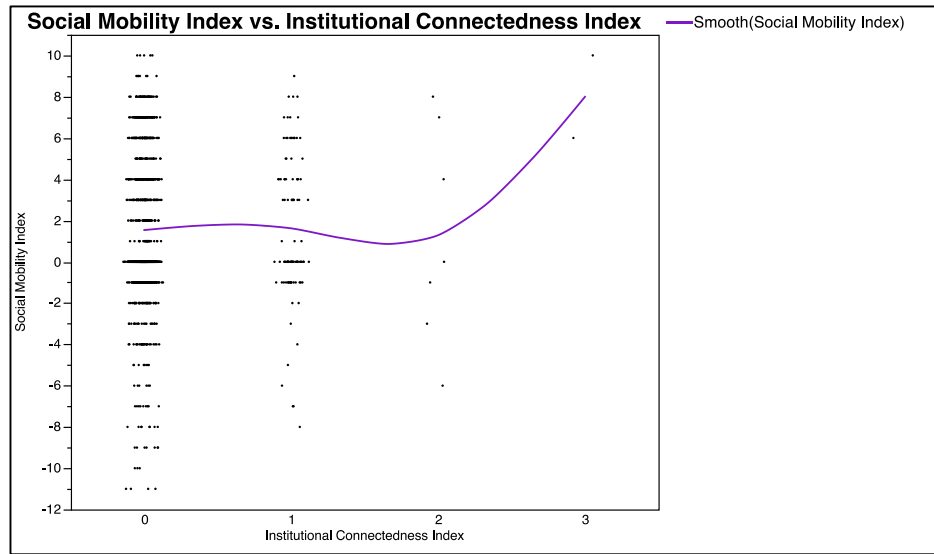


Figure J: Social Mobility Index vs. Institutional Connectedness Index, Bangalore



Sarah and her husband, Kumar, in St. Thomas Mount, Chennai, owe their family's success to one particular information source: the newspaper. Kumar's father had worked as a cook for a five star hotel in Anna Nagar, a city near Chennai. At the age of 30, Kumar had worked as a cook like his father for several years, but could not rely on a steady monthly income to support his wife and two children. Because entry-level government jobs have age limits, when he saw the newspaper ad for a position with the Tamil Nadu State Marketing Department, he realized it was his last shot for a sustainable government career. Kumar has now been with the department for more than eight years for a monthly income of Rs. 3000. Although they continue to find it difficult to live in the city with this minimal income, the steadiness and protection of a government job changed their family's trajectory. Both of their sons attend school and Kumar owns a two-wheeler.

Rajesh in Porur works as a car driver for his own transport service. His father was an employee of the Tamil Nadu Small Industries Corporation in Mugalivakkam. Although hailing from a family with the security of a government occupation, he grew up with five brothers and sisters and little in the name of prosperity. Rajesh's older brother went to law school and is a practicing advocate in the area. Although Rajesh himself only has a 10th grade education, his brother's position as a local community leader outside of his legal occupation helped Rajesh accumulate the capital support to start his transport service, after having worked at a less-attractive export company job. Rajesh now earns between five and ten thousand rupees a month, has the knowledge and connections to have secured a life insurance plan, a private Tata finance loan, and home ownership in Chennai. He reveals that his brother's network and influence has been a backbone for him and his family.

Sources of information and specifically, access to institutional entities, have a positive effect on low-income family's prospects for betterment across generations. While this relationship may not be linear in the Bangalore data, the statistically significant association warrants further investigation into the positive effects of information sources on low-income households in India. Those that have institutional connections are more likely to have the aspiration, access to knowledge, and relationships that make them successful in occupational growth. There are several instances where these connections alone have provided for social mobility among households in Chennai; however, connectedness does not explain the whole social mobility distribution. For further insight, it is

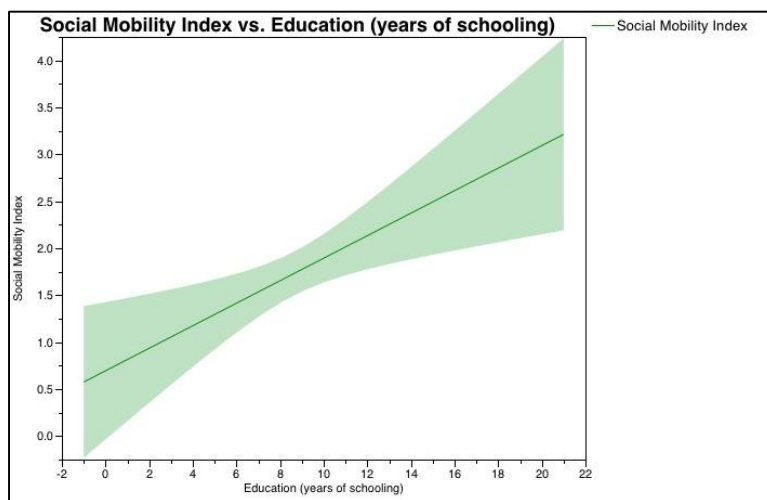
necessary to explore other factors that might influence the direction of change in occupation status over generations.

Education

Rajalakshmi, from Valarasakkam, is a community leader in her own right. She has helped organize and lead groups of women to acquire group microfinance loans from both government and NGO programs. Rajalakshmi has run for elections and has a wide network of government contacts to help the women in her community. Her interest in civic work might have stemmed from her parents, who were both public school teachers in the city. Rajalakshmi's mother worked very hard to pursue her education at a time when women had little education opportunity compared to their brothers in resource-stricken families. That passion for education afforded her the financial resources and knowledge to provide strong educations for her two children: Rajalakshmi and her brother. Rajalakshmi carries a Bachelor of Science degree in nutrition and her husband, a Bachelor of Arts degree. Her husband works as a road contractor and is also involved in local politics. The two of them have built their own home and are both prosperous and influential members of their community owing to the self-confidence and knowledge that their education provided.

Similar to connectedness, education is tested against social mobility indices from the Bangalore interviews (see Figure K). Education, as measured by number of years of schooling, displayed a statistically significant relationship with intergenerational growth. The more educated an urban slum resident, the more likely he or she was to overcome the barriers that held their parents from achieving high occupation statuses and to be protected from the risks of decline. Like Rajalakshmi and her husband, these slum residents have the knowledge and contacts to extend their occupational achievements beyond their parents. In Chennai, the average income among families with a female head who had at least a 10th grade education is about Rs. 15,000 a month, compared to the overall average monthly income of about Rs. 11,000. As a vast amount of literature agrees, education supports social mobility in the Chennai and Bangalore slum contexts prompting further investigation as to the conditions behind this type of relationship.

Figure K: Social Mobility Index vs. Education, Bangalore



Alcoholism

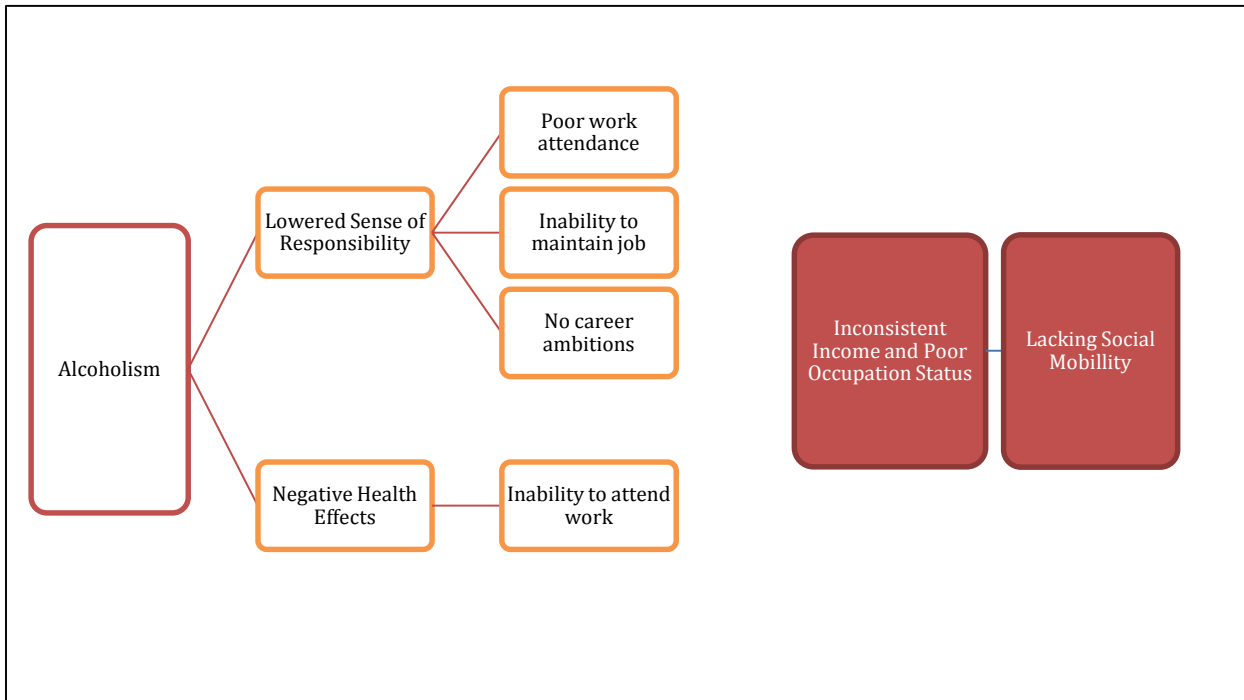
In comparison to education, alcoholism is a much less studied cause of lacking social mobility. Most commonly, its significance has been raised within the context of global health. This paper, on the other hand, argues that alcoholism in itself can be detrimental to social mobility in urban India.

In Chennai, many households had at least one member who consumed alcohol regularly and in a debilitating manner. It is much more common for a man to consume alcohol than a woman to do so in the areas that were studied, which is a reflection of the conservative south Indian culture. Sixty eight percent of the households interviewed had at least one member who consumed alcohol regularly and about 35% did so in a manner that affected their families' financial and emotional wellbeing. Alcoholism has caused major disruptions in family life and financial stability for these households. Having become an alcoholic, many of these men regularly spent precious family money on alcohol, had strained relationships with their wives and children, and brought home irregular monthly incomes, if any at all. Many of the wives were resigned to working themselves and staying out of their husbands' affairs with the threat of verbal and physical abuse. Alcohol is found readily available on any street sold by private and government entities. When asked why the wives did not persuade their husbands to visit a rehabilitation facility, there was either a lack of awareness of such facilities or unwillingness on the parts of the husbands to visit them. Alcoholism serves as a major barrier to progress. Regardless of the occupation level of their parents, male heads of households who became susceptible to drinking for any number of reasons also became susceptible to the decline in occupational status, for which slums are infamous.

Anjali, a 46-year old from Manapakkam, has been a victim of this pattern. Working as a parking lot sweeper for a high-end apartment complex in Chennai, Anjali's salary is the only income her and her husband have to survive. Anjali's daughter died ten years ago, just 18 months old, due a brain issue. Having come from a family of laborers herself, with a father who died from low-quality alcohol, Anjali had little in the name of savings to spend, and when they did take their daughter to a private hospital, the issue was not seen urgently because of the family's low-income status. After their daughter died, Anjali's husband, who had already begun to drink following their marriage, became an alcoholic, copying behavior from his older brothers and father. Her husband had worked different labor jobs and as a security guard, but now spends all his time drinking and has trouble maintaining any job with his addiction. Anjali earns Rs. 100 a day (the equivalent of \$2.00). Intimidated by her husband, she provides him Rs. 100 a week to buy alcohol. Household provisions, electricity, and food deplete the rest of her meager monthly salary. Anjali has few goals outside of maintaining her current job and the two of them continue to live in a makeshift hut house, with the risk of a fire at any given time.

Anjali's story is, unfortunately, not an uncommon one. Several wives revealed the imminent danger of alcoholism to their family – from verbal and physical abuse to the financial ramifications of the addiction, many households detailed the specific injuries that the sickness caused. In regards to the social mobility index used here, which is founded upon occupational status, there were two ways in which alcoholism can affect prospects for upward movement (see Figure L). One is similar to the lesson from Anjali's narrative, which is where alcoholism prevents the male head of household to either find work or maintain a successful career and deliver a regular salary for the family because he prioritizes drinking above regular attendance of work or family aspirations. The other is where alcohol directly affects a man's health and renders him incapable of attending work.

Figure L: Alcoholism's Effect on Social Mobility, Chennai



An extreme example of this is embedded in 40-year old Selvi's story in Santhosapuram, who was married at the age of 11 and lost her husband due to alcoholism at the age of 18. Her life prior to marriage had been ridden with poverty, having the opportunity to eat only one or two meals a day, with the income of her father's low-level government position and mother's flower sales. Widowed while still a teenager, Selvi lived with her mother-in-law who sold alcohol she brewed herself. Selvi supported her two daughters and son using flower sales, earning her Rs. 200 on a good day. Sitting on the floor in her small stone house with a thatched roof, Selvi shared that, ironically, they had been better off those few years that she had joined her mother-in-law in selling alcohol, because of the high profits. The frequent police station visits and arguments with her mother-in-law, an alcoholic herself, were not worth it for Selvi. Without an education and no widow's pension until the age of 40, she managed to raise her children. Her son has now started drinking himself and her son-in-law is barely able to support his own children due to his alcohol addiction. Having been tormented by the negative effects of alcohol her whole life, Selvi is a perfect example of the lack for social mobility caused by such an addiction.

While death is an extreme example of the health effects of alcoholism, other health issues were also observed among households with alcoholic members. These health issues hurt occupation prospects, and stole money for hospital expenses. Many wives claimed that the reason their husbands started drinking was because of physically demanding labor jobs for which alcohol could relieve some physical pain. Others said it was just because of their husband's social circles and the need for a release. Social drinking is not a part of the traditional Indian culture and drinking any alcohol often results in complete drunkenness and possibly, addiction. The causes behind alcoholism in urban slums are, however, beyond the scope of this paper.

Alcoholism casts a pall of suffering upon the entire household, restricting social engagement and economic initiative, while raising familial tensions and health costs. Thus, alcoholism may be

better characterized as an amplifier of existing vulnerabilities, rather than a definer of social regression. Regardless, there is a negative relationship between alcoholism and social mobility. The main argument here is derived from results from the Chennai study; affirmation of this relationship from Bangalore, and analysis of the relationships between alcoholism and the other variables will require additional data collection.

Household Security

Household security among the urban slum population may be another determinant of social mobility. UN-Habitat defines a slum household as one that lacks one or more of the following Durable housing; sufficient living space; easy access to safe water; access to adequate sanitation; and security of tenure that prevents forced evictions (UN-Habitat, 2007).

As the very definition of an urban slum is dependent on housing insecurity, it is likely that this quality of slum life has prevented upward occupational growth. In Chennai, forty-two percent of the households interviewed were living in a rented house or apartment. Twenty five percent were living in government-provided housing that had been inherited from previous generations. An additional eighteen percent had inherited their house or apartment and had not paid for it themselves. In fact, when asked what their immediate goals were, many responded that buying a house for themselves was top on their list. Rising prices and the urbanization of rural areas have made such aspirations seemingly impossible for the time being. While the brute force policies of evictions and demolitions, which were seen as the solution between the 1950s-90s, are no longer imminent threats to these Chennai residents, the very cost of rent and instability of poor housing makes achieving housing security one of their primary life ambitions (Kiran, 2006).

In Bangalore, a statistically significant relationship is found between housing security and intergenerational mobility. Ownership, then leasing, then rental represents the order of security for the tenant and household. Interestingly, those that leased their property displayed the most intergenerational growth, followed by those that rented their place. Those that owned the place they lived in were more likely to display less social mobility (see Figure M). This finding counters the hypothesis that was suggested earlier. The mean social mobility index of those renting their homes is slightly higher than that of those who own the homes they live in (see Table 5 and Table 6).

There are several reasons this might be the case. The question that is used to test housing security specified that the respondent answer about the house they currently stay in. If residents rent their homes in the city neighborhoods they live in and also own some form of housing outside of the city, near their ancestral hometowns, then those that rent their places might actually have greater housing security, representing a foundation upon which to pursue social mobility. A second possibility is that the quality of those that own their homes is poorer than of those that rent their homes. The Bangalore families that rent their homes might not be living in cement apartments, while those that own homes might live under thatched, plastic sheet, or aluminum roofs with minimal space and amenities or on land without legal documentation. A third point to note is that none of the Bangalore households interviewed experienced a threat of demotion over night. Each of the slums is well established, and the fear of eviction, faced in more recent slums or shantytowns, is not characteristic of those interviewed here. Thus, this particular sample may not enable a comprehensive test of the hypothesis. These supplementary details around housing security must be investigated before assuming that a rented occupied house is less secure than a family's own.

Figure M: Occupational Status Change vs. Housing Security, Bangalore

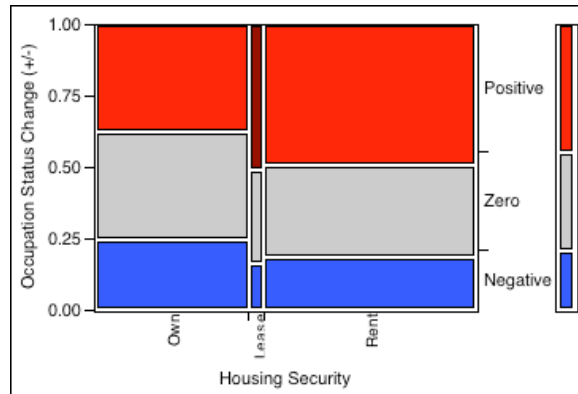


Table 5: Housing Security, Bangalore

Housing Security By Direction of Change				
Count Total % Col % Row %	Negative	Zero	Positive	Total
Own	135 10.07 48.04 24.91	204 15.22 44.06 37.64	203 15.15 34.06 37.45	542 40.45
Lease	9 0.67 3.20 16.36	18 1.34 3.89 32.73	28 2.09 4.70 50.91	55 4.10
Rent	137 10.22 48.75 18.44	241 17.99 52.05 32.44	365 27.24 61.24 49.13	743 55.45
Total	281 20.97	463 34.55	596 44.48	1340

Table 6: Housing Security Distribution, Bangalore

Social Mobility By Housing Security					
Level	Number	Mean (SM)	Std Error	Lower 95%	Upper 95%
Own	542	1.17528	0.15104	0.8790	1.4716
Lease	55	2.16364	0.47414	1.2335	3.0938
Rent	743	1.80350	0.12900	1.5504	2.0566

Despite the potential issues with the Bangalore data set, some evidence is still found in support of the housing hypothesis. Although the mean social mobility index might be higher among those that rent their houses in Bangalore, it is worth noting that a higher proportion of those who displayed no growth or negative growth rented their homes than owned their homes. Moving from residence to residence as rent prices fluctuate over time might hurt opportunities for career

development. In addition, the monthly cost of rent might eliminate the amount of income disposable for business investments, access to education, or other knowledge-enhancing avenues.

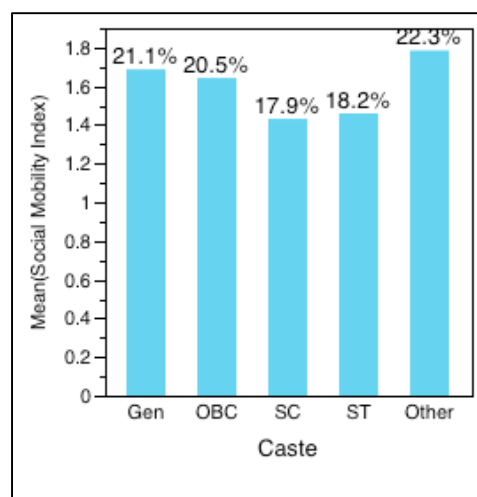
The Chennai data helps illustrate this hypothesis better. Banu from Anandapuram in Chennai overcame many of her family hardships with the help of microfinance loans and proudly names buying a 2-bedroom concrete home as one of her biggest life accomplishments. Her husband is an alcoholic and the family was strapped for cash for their three children for years while living in a straw house. Banu's father and father-in-law both died from alcoholism, and her support network was limited. She has translated her suffering to community leadership and she champions social causes across the neighborhood and is well-connected with the local politics. After educating her children to complete high school, two are now employed, and one married with two children. At the age of 41, Banu beams with pride as she explains how she slowly constructed parts of her house over the course of two years, which is now worth 6 lakhs. The house security allowed her the financial freedom to buy her husband an auto rickshaw costing a Rs. 30000 premium. Her husband is able to bring home Rs. 400/day as an auto driver, supplementing the income they receive from their daughter. Banu and her family used their housing security to afford their primary breadwinner the capital investment to secure a profitable occupation and strive towards a better future than those of her parents.

These combined findings suggest that housing security does have a significant relationship with social mobility particularly in relieving financial obligations to afford career-assisting expenses. However, further data must be collected regarding the level and nature of housing security among urban slum households to better understand the nature of this relationship. In several instances this relationship is a positive one, as in Banu's case, however housing security's effect on social mobility hinges upon the type of housing and other variables that must be further explored.

Caste

Each of the variables tested up to this point are not predefined for any family and can shift at any time. The next variable to be discussed, caste, is one that is pre-assigned. Using the Bangalore data for analysis, I found that caste did not matter in incremental intergenerational growth across slums. There is no reason to believe that one caste did any better than the other in terms of occupational growth and there is no statistically significant correlation between the two variables among the households interviewed (see Figure N).

Figure N: Social Mobility vs. Caste, Bangalore



It should be noted, however, that the greatest proportion of slum residents are in the SC caste. Sixty-three percent of those that are currently the lowest occupation status across the Bangalore slums studied identify themselves as Scheduled Caste. This suggests that this caste represents a disproportionate number of those with lower occupation status. While the chances for intergenerational growth are equal across castes, this group may require faster rates of growth to overcome the liabilities of the past.

Caste was mentioned a few times in Chennai field interviews as a consideration with government jobs that have affirmative action programs for certain castes. There are specific rules regarding how old a person has to be depending on caste to have a particular government position. For example, Veda's son was already 28 and because he was OBC caste he could not get a government position after the age of 30, which placed an additional pressure on the family. I also spoke with families who manipulated their children's birth certificates with a caste that they believed would offer their child the best chances for an education and job based on these affirmative action programs. Oftentimes if a household was inter-caste, parents would choose the traditionally disadvantaged caste to include on their children's birth certificate so that he or she might benefit from it in the future.

In general, however, caste is not a defining characteristic of any family's success or failure across generations within these urban slum communities. Those from backwards classes were no less likely to achieve upward mobility than those from general castes in the studied population. In fact, strong affirmative action programs might actually have created a context where backwards classes have an edge in employment opportunities. Overall, the hypothesis that caste did not significantly affect any family's occupational status trajectory is confirmed.

C. Limitations

These two sets of data represent information from two large urban centers in South India and provide a reflection of the urban poor in this region. They both investigate a variety of causes behind lacking social mobility, and suggest certain policy initiatives. The findings are only generalizable to the geographic area in which they are concentrated, which is South Asia, although it seems likely that these factors may be significant in other developing urban regions. Future investigations will reveal whether these conclusions have wider validity.

Another point to emphasize is the measure of parent and child education being a part of both the cause and effect of intergenerational mobility. In this paper, I use occupational mobility to define social mobility, however, many other factors could be used to test the nature of upward mobility. Some of these factors might also be ones I have used as explanatory factor. For example, I treat education systems as an explanatory variable that is tested for significance in correlation to the indicators of intergenerational mobility. However, education has been also widely treated as a measure of social mobility as well. While the goal of this paper is to investigate intergenerational mobility, or the lack thereof, the data used is not longitudinal but cross-sectional in nature. Thus, claims of causation are limited. Factors discussed might run in conjunction, but are not necessarily causal.

CONCLUSIONS AND FURTHER QUESTIONS

Eleven years ago, the total number of slum dwellers in the world stood at about 924 million people. This represents about 32 per cent of the world's total urban population, 43 per cent of the combined urban populations of all developing regions, and 78.2 per cent of the urban population in the least developed countries (UN, 2003). The challenge of urban slums extends beyond sheltering and aesthetics to the very roots of urban poverty in the developing world. The dismal vulnerability that characterizes urban slums can be combated with policies that target those specific roots. In order to raise the standard of livelihood for the hundreds of millions of people in urban slums, prospects for betterment across generations must turn from a dream to reality. Ideally, one day, those that venture to the city can truly benefit from the exponential economic growth that countries like India are experiencing.

This paper explored the influence of five factors on prospects for social mobility within the context of urban slums. Four of these factors were found to have a significant relationship with social mobility— institutional connectedness, education, alcoholism, and housing security. Caste, on the other hand, is found not to significantly affect prospects for social mobility among the studied communities. This investigation does not tell us all the resolutions to the plight of all urban slum dwellers, but it does give us an idea of the types of questions that need to be addressed by future poverty strategies.

Institutional connectedness plays a very important role in providing the avenues through which to acquire financial resources and critical relationships that can guarantee occupational growth, regardless of where one starts. In fact, the value of education, as explored in this study, may be significant only to the extent to which those institutional connections may be forged. Education provides the confidence, aspirations, and knowledge with which to seek out channels of information and therefore, pursue occupational success. Housing security comes into play as a financial relief, especially among households in established slum neighborhoods that are not under the immediate threat of demolition. Thus, housing security may afford families the opportunity to pursue both education and institutional connections. Moreover, families that have laid their roots in a certain community are more likely to have the inclination to pursue local connections. Caste, is not a significant barrier to intergenerational progress, and should not a policy priority for the given contexts. Finally, alcoholism serves to exacerbate the negative repercussions of the lack of institutional connections, education, and housing security. It heightens, or sometimes creates, the barriers that stall intergenerational mobility and intensifies the vulnerability and suffering that slum life can bring.

Figure O: Interrelated Factors Leading to Vulnerability

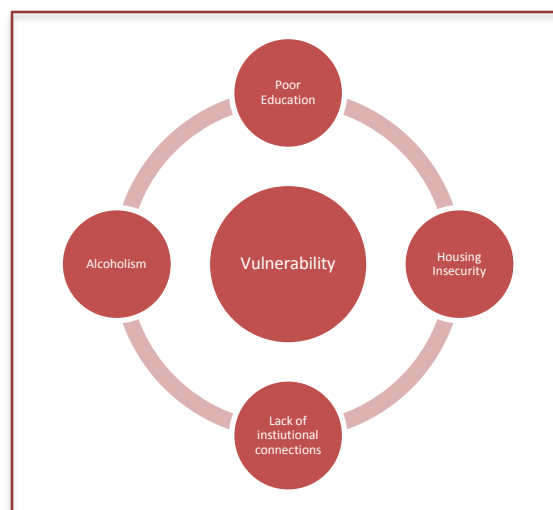
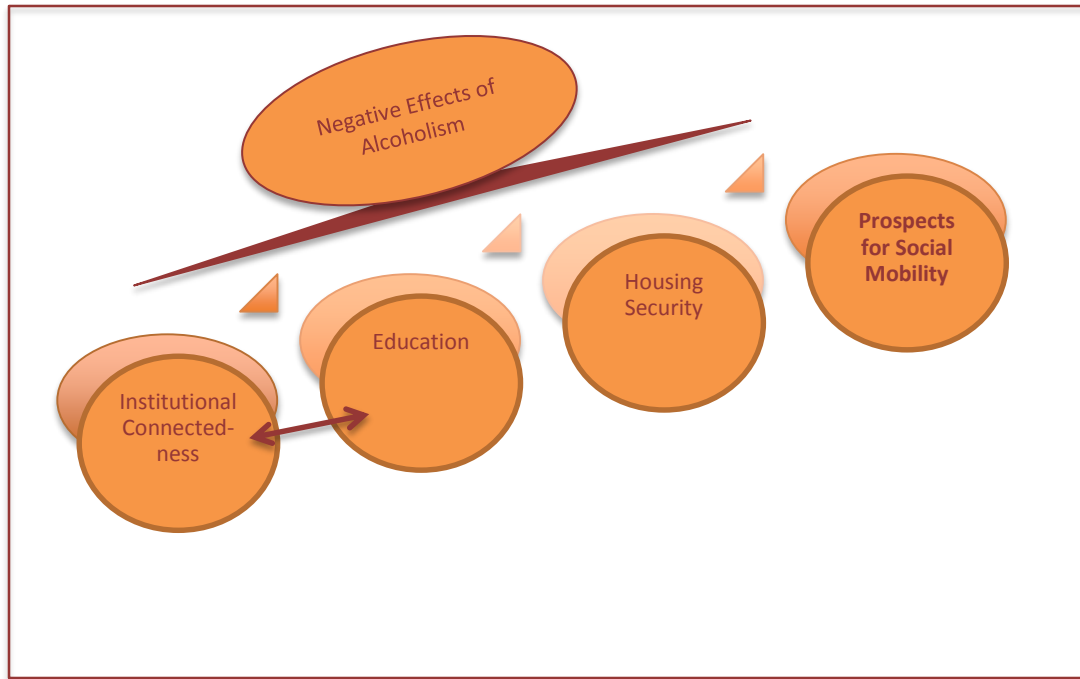


Figure P: Interrelated factors leading to Social Mobility



Fixing any of these variables alone will not diminish the stasis that dooms so many in urban India. A comprehensive policy solution will address each of the significant factors discussed in this text given the nature of their relationship to social mobility, and will also look to further research to define a comprehensive picture of urban slum vulnerability. Institutional connections should be one of the first variables addressed, as its relationship with intergenerational growth is relatively direct. Alcoholism should also be at the top of the list, as it both serves as an aggravator and instigator of intergenerational regression. Education and housing policy will require further research, but should be initially considered as means to secure the resources needed for social mobility. In framing a subsequent policy discussion, the following questions may serve as a fruitful starting ground:

1. How can institutional information sources, including community leaders, local NGOs, and government agencies, be made more accessible for slum residents?
2. What types of initiatives must be created to battle rampant alcoholism in urban slums? How best can alcohol prices and accessibility be addressed? How can alcoholism awareness campaigns and rehabilitation centers be developed to best serve the urban poor?
3. How can education policy be molded to provide the means with which to cultivate aspirations and pursue avenues for occupational success?
4. Which elements of housing security are the most crucial for intergenerational growth and what public initiatives can be created to increase this security across the country's urban hubs?

Given this understanding, it becomes easier to parse Devi and Priya's narratives for the defining forces of their success and vulnerability. Devi started at a disadvantage, with no access to institutional resources, including a nuclear family structure. Her lack of education, which limited her aspirations for growth and denied her the knowledge to pursue information channels, and housing security, which allowed for little financial freedom, further solidified her vulnerability. And finally, alcoholism worsened her household's economic welfare and social ties in the community. Priya, also

lacked family support at a young age, but her in-laws' family in the village of Andhra allowed her housing security, including land property. Due to her husband's death from alcoholism, she is no longer forced to deal with the suffering that accompanies a physically and emotionally abusive relationship. Finally, Priya's access to several microfinance organizations provided her the institutional resources to start her successful Amway and chit fund business that has culminated in substantial growth and prosperity for her and her children.

Inequality is indefensible to the extent that an individual's success is determined by circumstances outside of his control as Roemer contends (Roemer, 2004). The countless narratives, both dismal and hopeful, that compose each slum neighborhood reveal insights that can encourage a stronger understanding of the forces behind social inequality. The extent to which future public policies are drawn from the actual priorities and concerns of those they hope to serve define their success. While Devi and Priya have experienced different levels of economic growth in their lifetimes so far, those factors that have helped determine their prospects for social mobility overlap. The key to addressing urban poverty may be in these underlying themes. The mechanisms to foster the equality of opportunity must continue to be pursued and, in the process, countless more narratives remain to be uncovered.

REFERENCES

- Appadurai, A. "Deep Democracy: Urban Governmentality and the Horizon of Politics." *Public Culture* 14.1 (2002): 21-47.
- Bajpai, D., & Krishna, A. "Lineal Spread and Radial Dissipation: Experiencing Growth in Rural India." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2011): 44-51.
- Banerji, Rukmini. "Poverty and Primary Schooling: Field Studies from Mumbai and Delhi." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2000): 795-802.
- "Changing Patterns of Social Mobility: Some Trends over Time." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2002b): 4091-96.
- "Concept of Informal Sector." Concept of Informal Sector. The World Bank. Web. 25 Nov. 2012. <<http://lnweb90.worldbank.org/eca/eca.nsf/1f3aa35cab9dea4f85256a77004e4ef4/2c4ede543787a0c085256a940073f4e4?OpenDocument>>.
- "Country Comparison: GDP." CIA World Factbook. CIA, n.d. Web. 29 Oct. 2012. <<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/>>.
- Davis, Mike. *Planet of Slums*. London: Verso, 2006.
- Deshpande, R., & Palshikar, S. (2008), Patterns of occupational mobility: How much does caste matter? *Economic and Political Weekly*, August, 43(34), 23-29, 61-70.
- Glaeser, Edward L. *Triumph of the City: How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*. New York: Penguin, 2011.
- Gupta, I., & Mitra, A. "Rural Migrants and Labour Segmentation." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2002): 163-68.
- Heath, O., Heath, A., Kumar, S. "Determinants of Social Mobility in India." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2002a): 2983-87.
- Heath, O., Heath, A., Kumar, S. "Changing Patterns of Social Mobility." *Economic and Political Weekly* (2002b): 4091-4096.
- Iannelli, C., and Patterson, L. "Does Education Lead to Social Mobility." *Center for Educational Sociology* 35 (2005).
- India. Planning Commission. Press Information Bureau. Press Note on Poverty Estimates, 2009-10. 2012.
- "India - A Country Profile." Indian Alcohol Policy Alliance. Global Alcohol Policy Alliance, Web. 12 Nov. 2012.

- Jalan, J., & Murgai, R. (2007). Intergenerational mobility in education in India. Processed, World Bank, Delhi.
- Jernigan, D., Monteiro, M., Room, R., & Saxena, S. (2000): Towards a global alcohol policy: Alcohol, public health and the role of the WHO. *Bulletin of the WHO*.
- Kanbur, R., & Herring, R. "QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE POVERTY APPRAISAL: COMPLEMENTARITIES, TENSIONS AND THE WAY FORWARD." (2001): 1-106. Web.
- Kiran, Asha. "Urban Slums in India - the Myths and the Reality." *Asha-Seattle's quarterly Newsletter* 2006, 2 ed.: 2-4.
- Krishna, Anirudh. *One Illness Away*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Majumder, Rajarshi. "Intergenerational Mobility in Educational and Occupational Attainment A Comparative Study of Social Classes in India." *The Journal of Applied Economic Research* 4.4 (2010): 463-94.
- Mitra, Arup. "Land Price in Indian Cities." *Economic and Political Weekly* (1990): 2723-729. Web.
- Morgan, Stephen L. "Past Themes and Future Prospects for Research on Social and Economic Mobility." *Mobility and Inequality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006. 3-22.
- Motiram, S., & Singh, A. "How Close Does the Apple Fall to the Tree? Some Evidence on Intergenerational Occupational Mobility from India." *Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research* (2012): 1-32.
- National Commission for Enterprises in the Unorganised Sector. "Report on the Conditions of Work and Promotion of Livelihoods in the Unorganised Sector." New Delhi: Dolphin Print Graphics, 2007. 1-376.
- Pant, K C. *India's Development Scenario Next Decade and Beyond*. New Delhi: Academic Foundation, 2003.
- Roemer, John E. "Equal Opportunity and Intergenerational Mobility: Going Beyond Intergenerational Income Transition Matrices." *Generational Income Mobility in North America and Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. 49.
- Rosenzweig, K., & Munshi, M. "Why Is Mobility in India So Low? Social Insurance, Inequality, and Growth." NBER Working Paper No. 14850 (2009).
- Solon, Gary. "Cross-Country Differences in Intergenerational Earnings Mobility." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 16.3 (2002): 59-66.
- Swaminathan, Mathura (1997): The determinants of earnings among low-income workers in Bombay: An analysis of panel data, *The Journal of Development Studies*, 33:4, 535-551

The Town and Country Planning Organisation. Slums of Chennai. Chennai: Industrial and Economic Planning 2006.

Torche, Florencia. "Economic Crisis and Inequality of Educational Opportunity in Latin America." *Sociology of Education* 83.2 (2010): 85-110.

UN-Habitat: *The State of the World's Cities 2006/7*. Rep. 2007. UN-Habitat. Web.

United Nations. UN-Habitat. *The Challenge of Slums: Global Report of Human Settlements 2003*.

"UN Urges Action to Curb Harmful Use of Alcohol, Reduce Drink-related Deaths." UN News Center. UN, 02 Nov. 2011. Web. 12 Nov. 2012.
<<http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=37515>>.

World Health Organization. *India: Socioeconomic Context*. 2011.

